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U. S. Department of Agriculture

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics; U. S. Department of Agriculture

HAM FOR EASTER

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Dainty new clothes and good food are two of the more worldly things associated with Easter. And the woman who looks after these practical matters selects the menu for this particular Sunday dinner as painstakingly as she assembles her costume for the fashion parade.

This year, if she happens to have her heart set on ham as the cornerstone of her dinner, she's in luck. Ham prices are reasonable this spring as are prices for all cured pork products, according to figures collected by the Department of Agriculture.

If the Easter ham comes from a porker that "stayed at home", its acquisition probably will be a simple matter of a trip to the farm smokehouse. But if it comes from a porker that "went to market" there are a number of points to consider when buying it.

First of all, it's important to know how the ham was cured -- so that it may be cooked accordingly.

Up until a year or two ago most hams on the market were cured slowly. But now, more and more hams are being cured by a new, quicker method. Some of the hams cured this new way are smoked at higher temperatures and are therefore often partially cooked when they are sold. Words implying tenderness printed on the wrapper usually distinguish them.

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Another type of ham--sold to a lesser extent than either of these--is "precooked" ham. These are the only hams that have been smoked and heated long enough, at a high enough temperature, to be really cooked through.

Smithfield ham is a variation of the conventional type of smoked ham--especially popular in the South Atlantic States. These are aged and mellowed after curing and smoking. This aging gives the ham a cheesy flavor and a special texture.

Ham quality, to some extent, can be judged by looks. Best ones are meaty, thick through, and well-rounded. They have a shank that is moderately short rather than one so long it gives the ham funnel-shaped appearance.

A good bright color of lean is a mark of quality. So is a marbling of fat through the lean. The absence of this marbling, however, is not especially significant, since many good hams do not have it. To be an economical buy, a ham should not have a wasteful amount of fat. If the ham has been cut it's easier to note this. But it also may be observed on the butt end of the ham as it lies on the butcher's counter.

Ham is one of the few roasts that may be cut in two and still be roasted successfully. Sometimes the slices from the center are sold separately--then each end sold as a ham "half". A family that is not large enough to use a whole ham often will find a ham half that is the right size. Ham hocks usually are plentiful on the market, at bargain prices, and they make excellent meat flavoring.

It's a good idea to wrap ham, cooked or uncooked, in oiled paper and put it in a refrigerator. Spreading a little cooking oil over the cut surface of uncooked ham will delay drying and molding. Canned hams or parts of hams, which are labeled "Perishable, Keep Under Refrigeration" should be constantly held at ordinary refrigerator temperatures until used.



Shoulders of pork are cured in much the same way as hams. They may be kept and cooked in practically the same ways. On the market portions of shoulders also go under the names of "picnics", "Californias", or "Calas".

Whether a ham is soaked or not before cooking depends upon the cure. If this has been mild, soaking is not necessary. For strongly cured hams, soaking is advisable--overnight or longer in cold water to cover for hams cooked whole; just a short time for slices to be broiled or fried.

Like all pork, ham should be cooked thoroughly--to the point where it is well done. One of the best ways to cook a ham is to bake it slowly at 250 to 260 degrees Fahrenheit. Add no water and use no cover on the pan. If the ham has been soaked, wipe it dry. Then place the ham, rind sideup, on a rack in an open pan.

If a meat thermometer is inserted into the center of the roast, the ham is done when that registers 170 degrees F. For conventionally cured and smoked hams, started when the meat is about room temperature and cooked whole this will take from 25 to 30 minutes for every pound of meat. For shank halves of hams it will be from 40 to 45 minutes. And butt ends require from 45 to 55 minutes. Remove the rind from the ham while it is still hot.

Another good way to cook ham is to "boil" it--that is simmer it in water to cover. Put the ham on a rack in a large kettle or broiler. Cooking time will be about the same as for baking.

Baked or boiled hams may be made into "things of beauty" for carving at the table. One way to do this is to score the fat into diamond shapes--then to put on a glaze by sprinkling the fat surface with brown sugar. Stud with cloves, and brown in a hot oven (about 500 degrees F.)

Pineapple slices and cherries also may be used decoratively. Hold them in place with toothpicks, then cover over with a brown sugar coating. When the ham comes out of the oven and cools slightly on the surface the toothpicks may be removed.



Ham--hot or cold--should be served in very thin slices. Raisin or cider sauce may accompany it, or fresh grated horseradish mixed with whipped cream if you wish to tone down the biting tang. Broiled peaches, fried pineapple, or apple slices also go well with any of the cured pork roasts.

And as for the leftovers, every scrap of cooked ham is good for seasoning. Grind it up and roll it in an omelet. Make into a spread for canapes; mix it into potato cakes; use it as part of the seasoning for devilling hard-cooked eggs; or spread it under a poached egg served on toast. One of the most customary ways of all is to mix it as a sandwich filling with salad dressing, chopped hard-cooked eggs, parsley and celery, or pickles.

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

MUSHROOMS ON THE MENU

On the bill of fare of many a place famed for its cuisine mushrooms appear-- frequently and in different guises. Chefs of these establishments usually are past masters at preparing mushrooms. For they regard them--as have food connoisseurs since ancient times--as a delicacy, a not-to-be-omitted ingredient of certain epicurean dishes.

Until the last decade or so a taste for mushrooms was one that only Americans with generous food budgets could indulge. But with increasing production and the lowering of prices, mushrooms have definitely come out of the food-luxury class.

It has been less than half a century since mushrooms first were cultivated commercially in the United States. Since then, it has expanded into a sizeable industry. Today, according to trade estimates, around 30,000,000 pounds are produced annually -- about double the production of ten years ago.

Big mushroom center of the United States is in and around Chester county, eastern Pennsylvania, and including part of northern Delaware. This region produces a majority of the mushrooms of this country. Other centers are located near practically all large cities.

Ordinarily where fresh mushrooms are sold they are available from fall to early summer. They are sold by weight--usually by bulk or in 1 or 3 pound packages. Canned mushrooms are in season any time of the year of course. Canned mushroom soups often are on grocery best-seller lists.



It is not necessary to have an extensive knowledge of mushroom varieties to buy them intelligently. In most localities only one variety, a white mushroom, is sold. On a few markets, however, a more strongly flavored brown mushroom variety is available.

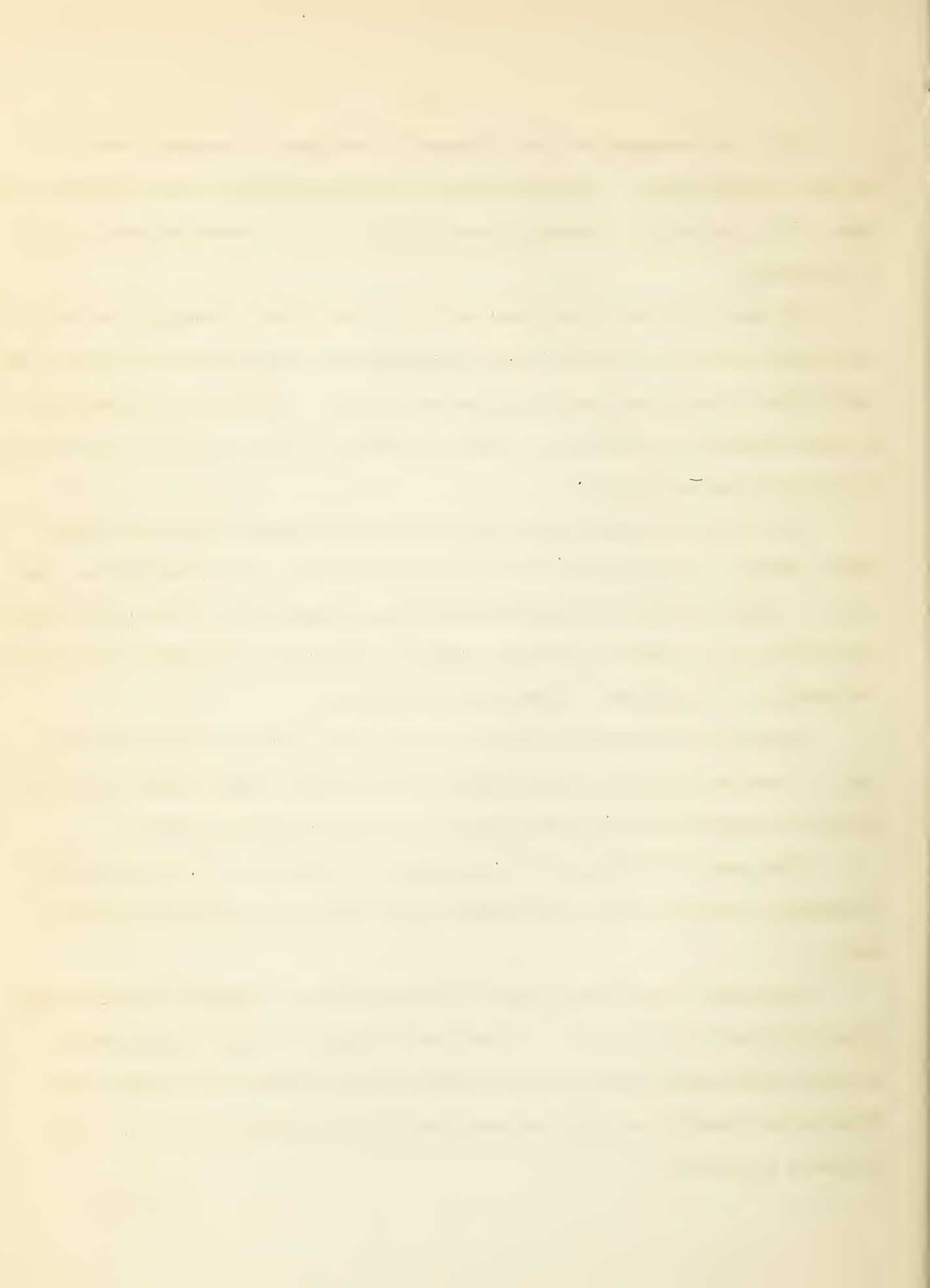
The main indicator of mushroom quality is freshness. Mushrooms are more perishable, dry out more quickly than most vegetables because they're made up of an open network of cells and have no protective coating. Freshness in mushrooms, as in other vegetables, shows up in a surface appearance that is not dried out and has no discoloration caused by age.

Mushrooms that command the highest price on the market are in the closed stage. That is, the protective "veil" that joins the cap to the stem has not been broken. This takes place as the mushroom matures, exposes the gills on the underside of the cap. Mushrooms with "open caps", though not so attractive, still make good eating, if they haven't deteriorated otherwise.

Naturally, the best mushrooms to buy will not be badly misshapen or have spots or damaged places that extend deeply into the cap. Stems longer than 1 1/4 inches are undesirable, though all stems can be used in certain dishes.

Size makes no difference in the quality of a mushroom. But as a matter of convenience in cooking it's a good idea to have them uniformly large, medium, or small.

There are no such simple rules to guide anyone who ventures to gather mushrooms from the fields and woods. There are thousands of these wild varieties. A few are more common than the rest. Anyone who picks them should gather only those he can identify as edible as unmistakably as he distinguishes a rose from a vine of poison ivy.



Concerning the nutritive value of the mushroom—food specialists give it no gold stars in this column. Justification for eating it must come from its other contributions—it's special flavor—delicate texture—the distinction it gives to dishes to which it is added.

Mushrooms cannot be substituted for meat, nutritionists point out. For although they do contain some nitrogen, this is mainly not in the form of protein.

To prepare mushrooms for cooking, wash them well just before they are needed. Some cooks like to remove the skin from the cap of the mushroom, but this is not necessary if it is tender.

Cardinal principle of mushroom cookery is "use low heat and do not cook overlong." High temperatures and overcooking cause them to shrivel and toughen. Also, use little water. Mushrooms, themselves, are over 90 percent water.

Broiled mushrooms are a definite addition to any grilled plate. Served on toothpicks they make interesting tidbits for party refreshments. Or for a more filling dish at the main course of a meal they may be served on buttered toast.

To broil, place the caps, gill side down, under the flame of the broiling oven for two or three minutes. Turn, sprinkle salt and pepper over the gill side. Place a small piece of butter in each cap. Broil under the flame for a few minutes longer. Lift carefully from the boiler in order not to lose the juice.

Creamed mushrooms have a better flavor if they are floured, then browned delicately before the cream or rich milk is added to make the sauce. There'll be more surface to brown if the mushrooms are sliced lengthwise from cap to stem. For soups, they may be cut up in smaller pieces to brown.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the origin of life. It is shown that the problem is not only a scientific one, but also a philosophical one. The scientific aspect of the problem is concerned with the question of how life arose from non-life. The philosophical aspect is concerned with the question of whether life is a necessary part of the universe or whether it is a mere accident.

The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various theories of the origin of life. These theories are divided into two main classes: the theory of spontaneous generation and the theory of biogenesis. The theory of spontaneous generation is the older of the two and is based on the idea that life can arise from non-life. The theory of biogenesis is the newer of the two and is based on the idea that life can only arise from pre-existing life.

The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the evidence for and against the various theories of the origin of life. It is shown that the evidence for spontaneous generation is weak, while the evidence for biogenesis is strong. It is also shown that the evidence for the theory of evolution is strong, while the evidence for the theory of creation is weak.

The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the implications of the various theories of the origin of life. It is shown that the theory of spontaneous generation implies that life is a necessary part of the universe, while the theory of biogenesis implies that life is a mere accident. It is also shown that the theory of evolution implies that life is a result of natural selection, while the theory of creation implies that life is the result of divine intervention.

The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the future of the study of the origin of life. It is shown that the study of the origin of life is a very active field of research and that many new discoveries are being made. It is also shown that the study of the origin of life is a very important field of research and that it has many practical applications.

Steak with mushrooms is a mealtime favorite of long standing. The mushrooms may be made into a sauce by cooking them in butter or drippings from the steak. Or large mushrooms may be broiled on a grill along with the steak.

One of the best of all ways to serve the large mushrooms is to stuff them.

Stuffed Mushrooms

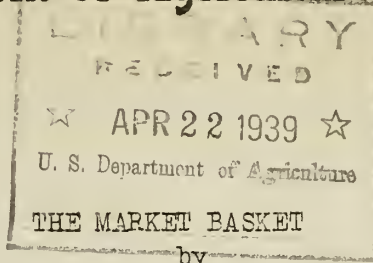
1 pound large mushrooms (12 to 14)	2 teaspoons onion juice
4 tablespoons butter or other fat	Pepper
3/4 cup chopped celery	1 teaspoon salt
2 cups fine bread crumbs	1 tablespoon chopped parsley

Wash the mushrooms well, remove the stems close to the caps, and chop the stems fine. Melt 2 tablespoons of the fat, add the chopped mushroom stems and celery, cook for about 5 minutes, and stir in the bread crumbs and seasonings. Turn the mushroom caps gill side up, and fill them with mounds of the stuffing. Place the stuffed mushrooms in a shallow pan, pour around them the rest of the melted fat, cover closely, and bake in a moderate oven (350°F.) for 30 to 45 minutes. Toward the last, remove the cover and let the crumbs brown lightly on top, or set the pan of mushrooms under the flame of the broiling oven for a few minutes to brown. Serve on rounds of buttered toast.

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SALT - THE UNIVERSAL GROCERY

Whether the family cook operates from a tent on the Sahara or a regulation American kitchen, salt is among her staple supplies. For common salt, or sodium chloride, is a universal grocery--invaluable for its many uses in the seasoning and preparation of food.

Anyone who has ever eaten an unsalted meal--a picnic dinner, for instance, where the hostess forgot the salt--knows how flat even highly flavored foods can taste without it. And he probably understands something of the desperation that led people in earlier days to pay enormous taxes--blaze perilous trade routes--even to go to war for salt.

Today salt is inexpensive because there is access to an almost inexhaustible world supply of it. The greatest share of the salt obtained in the United States is evaporated from brine wells. Michigan leads this country's six big salt-producing states. The others are Louisiana, Kansas, Ohio, California and West Virginia.

In recipe books, the phrase, "a pinch of salt," probably occurs more frequently than any other. And many times when salt is not listed among the ingredients the good cook adds a little anyway. For salt improves the flavor not only of practically all vegetables, cereals, meats, nuts, and eggs--but of some



fruits, candies, and beverages as well.

Standard directions for cooking vegetables in water call for it to be lightly salted from the beginning. That gives the salt time to dissolve and diffuse throughout the vegetable by the time it is done.

When broiling or frying meat, on the other hand, salt should be added after or at the end of the cooking. Salt tends to draw out the juices of the meat. In steaks and chops with much surface exposed this may amount to a considerable loss in meat flavor.

A meat roast can lose very little juice this way because there's a comparatively small proportion of exposed surface. So, because it's more convenient, it's a good idea to salt a roast before it goes into the oven.

Foods such as cornstarch puddings, cooked cereals, breads need a bit of salt to bring out the bland flavor of the starch. In a tested recipe for a yeast bread, this is enough to accent the wheaty taste of the flour--but not enough to give a salty taste or to slow the growth of the yeast.

In a recipe for yeast bread this amounts to about 1/2 teaspoon to a cup of flour. For biscuits, about 1/3 teaspoon to a cup of flour is usually enough. Muffins and griddle cakes need slightly less than biscuits. The standard amount of salt to use in cooked cereals such as rice, oatmeal, cornmeal is about 1 teaspoon to a quart of water.

Skillful cooks never neglect to add a dash of salt to cooked fruits and fruit drinks. And many find that cocoa, milkshakes, and some other beverages are also improved by a few grains of salt.

Because salt seems to make "sweet things sweeter" it should always be included in candies, cakes, ice creams, and sweet desserts. Sometimes the cake shortening contains salt. If it doesn't, from 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoonful is enough

for the ordinary cake recipe using from 1 to 2 cups sugar.

In dishes that call for the beaten whites of eggs it's a good practice to put a pinch of salt into the whites before beating. The salt stiffens the whites—makes them beat up faster, to a slightly greater volume, and makes the foam less likely to become watery on standing.

Another use of salt in egg cookery is to add a little to the water in which eggs are poached. This makes the eggs "set" more quickly, keeps them from scattering.

In addition to its use as a seasoner, salt is also highly valued in food preparation as a preservative. In the right concentrations it checks the action of spoilage organisms in meat and vegetables. At the same time, in brining vegetables, it favors the growth of helpful lactic acid-forming bacteria.

Anyone who has ever cranked a freezer can testify to another useful property of salt. Mixed with ice, it helps to freeze ice cream quickly. A mixture of salt and ice takes up more heat than does melting ice alone. Because fine salt tends to lump, it's better to use rock salt for this purpose. For best results the ice should be in small pieces and the salt distributed evenly through it.

Recommended proportion for freezing is 1 part salt to 8 parts ice for most mixtures. With this amount, ice cream freezes at a moderate rate without wasting salt or ice. Mousses, which are frozen without stirring, need more salt, if they are frozen by packing in a salt and ice mixture rather than a refrigerator. The proportion for them is 1 to 3. For packing, there should be a mixture of about 4 parts ice to 1 of salt.

In the centuries that salt has been established in its niche on the cupboard shelf, homemakers have found numerous other uses for it. In that time, salt has also gained the reputation for having certain magical powers that it does not have.

For instance, it was once believed that a preliminary soaking in salt

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water was necessary to make cucumbers edible. Today it is known that this soaking is unnecessary, takes away the cucumber's appetizing crispness, and leaves it flabby and water-soaked. Another mistaken notion is that soaking in salt water will dissolve out any bitter taste in eggplant.

Sodium and chlorine, the two elements that compose salt, are included in the list of minerals essential in nutrition. It isn't necessary, however, to give them special in planning diets, since they occur naturally in all food and since the body's needs for them are more than cared for by the salt used in cooking or at the table.

Generally, it's a good idea to taste the food before reaching for the salt shaker, but on sweltering summer days it may be desirable to get more salt than usual in the diet, because the body loses quantities of it in perspiration. Medical research workers have found that added salt helps to prevent heat prostrations. And in many factories it is now common practice for men working in very hot surroundings to take salt pills with their drinking water.

Following is a good recipe for an old favorite----Salt Rising Bread:

For 3-1/4 pounds of salt-rising bread make a starter of the following ingredients: 1 cup milk; 1 tablespoon sugar; 7 tablespoons cornmeal, preferably white; 1 teaspoon salt.

Scald the milk and stir in the sugar, cornmeal, and salt. Put this in a clean covered jar and place in a bath of water as hot as the hand can stand. Keep this mixture in a warm place (115° F.) from 6 to 7 hours, or until it shows fermentation.

To this mixture add 7-3/4 ounces (2 cups) all-purpose flour, 2 cups lukewarm water, 2 tablespoons sugar, and 3 tablespoons melted fat. Beat this sponge thoroughly, put the jar into the warm water bath (115° F.), and let rise until the sponge is very light and full of bubbles. To this sponge add 2 pounds, 1 ounce, (about 8-1/2 cups) sifted all-purpose flour, which will give a stiff dough. Knead for 10 to 15 minutes, cut, mold into loaves, place in greased pans, and allow to rise until two and one-half times the original bulk. Bake for about 35 minutes in a moderately hot oven--about 385 degrees F. for the first 10 minutes, 350 degrees F. to finish.

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THE MARKET BASKET
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Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

FOOD FOR CHILDREN

May Day, since time immemorial, has been a day of youthful celebration--of dancing, playing games, decorating with spring blossoms. May Day, since 1928, by presidential proclamation, has also been Child Health Day--time for taking inventory of the well-being of the nation's children.

This year, those in charge of May Day programs are giving special attention to the nutritional angle of child health. For it's an established fact that to be healthy in every way children must be well-nourished. Although well-nourished children may get sick, they ordinarily have more resistance to many kinds of disease than under-nourished children. And usually, once they are sick, they have a good chance of getting well quickly.

Important to the good nutrition of the child are his habits of eating, sleeping, and exercising--and his food.

To be adequate, the food children eat must provide materials for building strong bodies--muscle, blood, sound bones and teeth. It must supply enough energy materials to take care of the vigorous activity that is normally expected of healthy children. And it must keep their bodies in good running condition.

To simplify the planning of children's diets, nutritionists of the Bureau of Home Economics have outlined the following list of foods as a guide. A mother who sees to it that the food her child gets checks with this each day may be pretty sure he is well fed. This guide applies to growing children over one year old.

MILK. Every child needs from one and one-half pints to one quart of whole milk a day. This may be fresh milk; or canned evaporated milk diluted with an equal measure of water; or powdered whole milk mixed with water according to the directions on the package. Fresh milk must be clean and free from disease germs. Proper pasteurization or boiling will make it safe.

For children over 2, cheese may take the place of some milk. Cottage cheese and mild American cheese combined with other foods are suitable for older children, and are low-cost foods.

BUTTER. There should be some at every meal—or oleomargarine with added vitamin A. Some fat at each meal makes it "stay by" and gives a feeling of satisfaction. Butter and some brands of oleomargarine are good choices of fats for children because, in addition to providing energy materials, they also supply some vitamin A.

Children get a good deal of the fat and part of the vitamin A they need if they have a quart of whole milk a day. When skim milk or buttermilk is used instead of whole milk there should be greater emphasis on green and yellow vegetables and cod-liver oil to meet their daily needs for vitamin A.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. At least 4 servings daily.

One of these should be of a fruit or vegetable rich in vitamin C, such as oranges, grapefruit, tomatoes, greens, or cabbage. Children under 4 should have oranges, grapefruit, tomatoes, or the juice of one of these each day.

One serving should be of a food rich in vitamin A and in iron, such as a green leafy vegetable, one of the best of all sources. Other green vegetables, yellow vegetables and yellow fruits, and ripe tomatoes also contribute to the vitamin A needs of the day.

A third serving should be of potatoes or sweetpotatoes. These vegetables can be used to advantage more than once a day because they give good returns in food value for their cost.

The fourth serving may be either another helping of one of the fruits or vegetables already listed. Or it may be any other fruit or vegetable. Prunes, other dried fruits, and bananas furnish food value economically. Apples and root vegetables are cheap most of the year. Dried beans, dried peas, and peanuts supply iron and some of the vitamins as well as energy-producing and building materials at low cost.

EGGS. Once a day if possible. At least 4 or 5 a week.

When eggs are plentiful and cheap, one egg or more a day may well be served. This includes eggs used for cooking. Eggs are a good building food and may sometimes be the main dish for dinner. They are especially rich in iron and supply some vitamin A.

MEAT OR FISH. Once a day if possible. At least four times a week. Meats in general provide iron, some of the vitamins, and other building materials. This is true whether the cut is tough or tender, served rare or well done. Liver and kidneys are richer in iron and certain vitamins than lean muscle meat. Fish and shellfish have about the same food value as meat.

CEREALS AND BREAD. There needs to be at least one serving of cereal a day, more if food money is very limited, or appetites are large. For those who need plenty of energy food, such as children in their teens, bread should be served at every meal.

Children who get barely as many fruits and vegetables as they need should eat at least half of their servings of bread and cereal as whole-grain products. In counting servings of cereals include rice, grits, macaroni, spaghetti, and noodles as well as breakfast foods.

SWEETS. One or two a day--provided they do not take away the appetite for more important foods such as milk, vegetables, fruits, whole-grain cereals. As a

rule children should have sweets only at the end of the meal.

COD-LIVER OIL. Every day. Because cod-liver oil contains vitamins necessary for the building of strong bones, sound teeth, it is important to give it regularly to young children. They need to continue taking it during the years they are growing rapidly, especially in cold or cloudy seasons. Other preparations on the market are rich in these same vitamins, but a mother unfamiliar with vitamin units had better rely on cod-liver oil for her children unless a doctor advises some other vitamin A or D-rich preparation and tells her how much to use.

Children should not have their food highly seasoned, or be allowed beverages that contain the stimulant caffeine. And vegetables prepared by steaming, baking, or boiling are more suitable than those that are fried.

As long as children are growing, they need more food in proportion to their size than grown-ups need. If parents eat many highly seasoned sauces, rich gravies, and pastries, these should be omitted from the diets of children. But aside from such minor and easily adjusted differences, one meal should suit both children and parents.

